(c) if so, the number of companies which failed to file their annual returns since three years, year-wise; and

(d) the steps taken by Government to compel the companies to file their returns?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN): (a) to (d) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Financial Assistance to Essar Group

1553. SHRI R. SARATH KUMAR:
SHRI P.N. SIVA:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Essar Group of companies has more than Rs. 400 crore as outstanding loan payable to IDBI, ICICI and GIC which have not been cleared so far;

(b) whether it is also a fact that additional financial assistance has been provided as bail-outs to this Group; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and the action being taken to recover the dues from this Group?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL): (a) to (c) IDBI, ICICI & GIC have taken exposure in the Essar Group. However, in accordance with the practice and usages customary amongst the banks and in conformity with provisions of statutes governing the financial institutions as also the provisions of the Public Financial Institutions (obligations as to Fidelity and Secrecy) Act, 1983 the information in respect of the constituents of the Public Financial Institutions cannot be divulged.

Widening of Tax Base

1554. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY:
SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are thinking of further widening the tax base to cut fiscal deficit; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN): (a) and (b) Continuing efforts towards widening of tax base are a priority area for the Government. A number of changes in law are brought out in every budget with this end in view. Further changes in law, if any in this regard, will be considered during the annual budgetary exercise.

Showcause Notice to M/s. Seagram Mfg. Limited

1555. SHRI BHAGATRAM MANHAR:
SHRI RAJU PARMAR:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question 1005 given in the Rajya Sabha on 31st July, 2001 and state:

(a) what is the outcome of the show cause notice demanding Rs. 37.96 crores as customs duty issued to M/s. Seagram Mfg. Ltd. on 19th December, 2000;

(b) whether another showcause notice for evasion of customs duty amounting to Rs. 12 crores for the period from July 2000 to June, 2001 has also been issued;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the progress so far made in regard to the prosecution complaint launched against the company and its officials?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN): (a) The adjudication process in respect of showcause notice demanding customs duty amounting to Rs. 37.96 crores issued to M/s. Seagram Mfg. (Ltd. on 19.12.2000 is in progress.

(b) and (c) Another showcause notice for evasion of customs duty amounting to Rs. 12.08 crores (approx.) for the period from July, 2000 to May, 2001 by M/s. Seagram Mfg. Ltd. has been issued, which is pending adjudication.

(d) In pursuance of direction of the Hon'ble High Court of Delhi in a writ petition filed by M/s. Seagram Mfg. Ltd. against the prosecution complaint filed by Directorate of Revenue Intelligence against the company and its 4 officials, the accused appeared before the Hon'ble ACMM, New Delhi on 18.10.2001 and were granted interim bail by the Hon'ble ACMM. The case again came up for hearing before the Hon'ble ACMM on 28.11.2001, but was adjourned for 15.12.2001.